

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Patent Application

Applicant(s): R.L. Hackbarth et al.

Case: 2-3-12

Serial No.: 09/886,876

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Group: 2174

Examiner: Ryan F. Pitaro

Title: Apparatus and Method for Use in Portal Service
for a Team Utilizing Collaboration Services

APPEAL BRIEF

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

Applicants (hereinafter "Appellants") hereby appeal the final rejection dated April 4, 2007 of claims 1-27 of the above-identified application.

REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The present application is assigned of record to Lucent Technologies Inc. On November 30, 2006, the assignee Lucent Technologies Inc. completed a merger with Alcatel S.A., with the resulting entity being named Alcatel-Lucent. Alcatel-Lucent is the real party in interest.

RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no known related appeals or interferences.

STATUS OF CLAIMS

The present application was filed on June 21, 2001, with claims 1-27. The application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/266,791 filed on February 6, 2001. Claims 1-27 are currently pending in the application. Claims 1, 10 and 18 are the independent claims.

Each of claims 1-27 stands finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Claims 1-27 are appealed.

STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

There have been no amendments filed subsequent to the final rejection.

SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

Independent claim 1 is directed to a method for use in providing a Web team portal in a collaborative system. This method includes steps of setting up a plurality of team members to collaboratively communicate, automatically collecting presence information of each of said members in said team, and automatically determining a current location for each team member. The method also includes a step of dynamically displaying a visual representation having a plurality of display windows including at least said team members, said collected presence and location information, and a set of mechanisms for a team member to use in conjunction with said displayed presence and location information to initiate a prescribed mode of communicating with one or more others of said members in said team for a particular collaborative purpose. Said visual representation comprises a time axis having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of a plurality of time ranges of differing durations arranged along the time axis in a sequence of increasing duration from a first time range of relatively short duration to additional time ranges of progressively longer duration, a category axis having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of the team members, and a plurality of graphic elements, a given one of the graphic elements specifying an activity state for a particular one of the plurality of team members for a particular time period, the particular one of the plurality of team members being

indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the category axis, the particular time period being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the time axis.

An illustrative embodiment of the method recited in independent claim 1 is directed to a method for use in providing a Web team portal (e.g., TeamPortal View 214 in FIG. 2) in a collaborative system (e.g., those shown in FIGS. 2-4). This method includes steps of setting up a plurality of team members to collaboratively communicate (e.g., by Service Framework 201, described in the specification at, for example, page 5, lines 9-11), automatically collecting (e.g., by User Agent 203, described in the specification at, for example, page 6, lines 26, through page 7, line 14) presence information of each of said members in said team and automatically determining (e.g., by User Agent 203, described in the specification at, for example, page 6, lines 26, through page 7, line 14) a current location for each team member. The method also includes a step of dynamically displaying a visual representation (e.g., ConnectIcon View 215, described in the specification at, for example, page 8, line 21, through page 9, line 4) having a plurality of display windows including at least said team members, said collected presence and location information, and a set of mechanisms for a team member to use in conjunction with said displayed presence and location information to initiate a prescribed mode of communicating with one or more others of said members in said team for a particular collaborative purpose. Said visual representation (e.g., OpenChannel View 217 as shown in FIG. 10 and described in the specification at, for example, page 25, line 26, through page 27, line 3) comprises a time axis (e.g., 1003) having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of a plurality of time ranges of differing durations arranged along the time axis in a sequence of increasing duration from a first time range of relatively short duration to additional time ranges of progressively longer duration, a category axis (e.g., 1002) having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of the team members, and a plurality of graphic elements (e.g., 1004), a given one of the graphic elements specifying an activity state for a particular one of the plurality of team members for a particular time period, the particular one of the plurality of team members being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the category axis, the particular time period being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the time axis.

Independent claim 10 is directed to an apparatus for use in providing a Web team portal in a collaborative system. This apparatus includes means for setting up a plurality of team members to collaboratively communicate, means for automatically collecting presence information of each of said members in said team, and means for automatically determining a current location for each team member. The apparatus also includes means for dynamically displaying a visual representation having a plurality of display windows including at least said team members, said collected presence and location information, and a set of mechanisms for a team member to use in conjunction with said displayed presence and location information to initiate a prescribed mode of communicating with one or more others of said members in said team for a particular collaborative purpose. Said visual representation comprises a time axis having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of a plurality of time ranges of differing durations arranged along the time axis in a sequence of increasing duration from a first time range of relatively short duration to additional time ranges of progressively longer duration, a category axis having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of the team members, and a plurality of graphic elements, a given one of the graphic elements specifying an activity state for a particular one of the plurality of team members for a particular time period, the particular one of the plurality of team members being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the category axis, the particular time period being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the time axis.

An illustrative embodiment of the apparatus recited in independent claim 10 is directed to an apparatus for use in providing a Web team portal (e.g., TeamPortal View 214 in FIG. 2) in a collaborative system (e.g., those shown in FIGS. 2-4). The apparatus includes means for setting up a plurality of team members to collaboratively communicate (e.g., Service Framework 201, described in the specification at, for example, page 5, lines 9-11), means for collecting presence information of each of said members in said team (e.g., User Agent 203, described in the specification at, for example, page 6, lines 26, through page 7, line 14), and means for determining a current location for each team member (e.g., User Agent 203, described in the specification at, for example, page 6, lines 26, through page 7, line 14). The apparatus also includes a step of dynamically displaying a visual representation (e.g., ConnectIcon View 215,

described in the specification at, for example, page 8, line 21, through page 9, line 4) having a plurality of display windows including at least said team members, said collected presence and location information, and a set of mechanisms for a team member to use in conjunction with said displayed presence and location information to initiate a prescribed mode of communicating with one or more others of said members in said team for a particular collaborative purpose. Said visual representation (e.g., OpenChannel View 217 as shown in FIG. 10 and described in the specification at, for example, page 25, line 26, through page 27, line 3) comprises a time axis (e.g., 1003) having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of a plurality of time ranges of differing durations arranged along the time axis in a sequence of increasing duration from a first time range of relatively short duration to additional time ranges of progressively longer duration, a category axis (e.g., 1002) having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of the team members, and a plurality of graphic elements (e.g., 1004), a given one of the graphic elements specifying an activity state for a particular one of the plurality of team members for a particular time period, the particular one of the plurality of team members being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the category axis, the particular time period being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the time axis.

Independent claim 18 is directed to an apparatus for use in providing a Web team portal in a collaborative system. The apparatus includes a call set up unit to set up a plurality of members in a team to collaboratively communicate and a user agent unit to automatically collect presence and location information of each of said members in said team. The apparatus also includes a visual display unit to dynamically display a visual representation having a plurality of display windows including at least said team members, said collected presence and location information, and a set of mechanisms for a team member to use in conjunction with said displayed presence and location information to initiate a prescribed mode of communicating with one or more others of said members in said team for a particular collaborative purpose. Said visual representation comprises a time axis having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of a plurality of time ranges of differing durations arranged along the time axis in a sequence of increasing duration from a first time range of relatively short duration to additional time ranges of progressively longer duration, a category axis having axis positions corresponding

to respective ones of the team members, and a plurality of graphic elements, a given one of the graphic elements specifying an activity state for a particular one of the plurality of team members for a particular time period, the particular one of the plurality of team members being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the category axis, the particular time period being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the time axis.

An illustrative embodiment of the apparatus recited in independent claim 18 is directed to an apparatus for use in providing a Web team portal (e.g., TeamPortal View 214 in FIG. 2) in a collaborative system (e.g., those shown in FIGS. 2-4). The apparatus includes a call set up unit (e.g., Service Framework 201, described in the specification at, for example, page 5, lines 9-11) to set up a plurality of members in a team to collaboratively communicate and a user agent unit (e.g., User Agent 203, described in the specification at, for example, page 6, lines 26, through page 7, line 14) to automatically collect presence and location information of each of said members in said team. The apparatus also includes a visual display unit (e.g., ConnectIcon View 215, described in the specification at, for example, page 8, line 21, through page 9, line 4) to dynamically display a visual representation having a plurality of display windows including at least said team members, said collected presence and location information, and a set of mechanisms for a team member to use in conjunction with said displayed presence and location information to initiate a prescribed mode of communicating with one or more others of said members in said team for a particular collaborative purpose. Said visual representation (e.g., OpenChannel View 217 as shown in FIG. 10 and described in the specification at, for example, page 25, line 26, through page 27, line 3) comprises a time axis (e.g., 1003) having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of a plurality of time ranges of differing durations arranged along the time axis in a sequence of increasing duration from a first time range of relatively short duration to additional time ranges of progressively longer duration, a category axis (e.g., 1002) having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of the team members, and a plurality of graphic elements (e.g., 1004), a given one of the graphic elements specifying an activity state for a particular one of the plurality of team members for a particular time period, the particular one of the plurality of team members being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to

the category axis, the particular time period being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the time axis.

GROUND OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

Claims 1-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0101446A1 (hereinafter “Tang”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,877,758 (hereinafter “Seybold”).

ARGUMENT

With regard to the §103(a) rejection, Appellants initially note that a proper *prima facie* case of obviousness requires that the cited references when combined must “teach or suggest all the claim limitations,” and that there be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to combine the references or to modify the reference teachings. See MPEP §706.02(j).

Appellants submit that the Examiner has failed to establish a proper *prima facie* case of obviousness in the §103(a) rejection of independent claim 1, for at least the reasons that the combined teachings of Tang and Seybold fail to teach or suggest all limitations of claim 1 and that no cogent motivation has been identified for combining Tang and Seybold or modifying the reference teachings to reach the claimed invention.

The Examiner acknowledges that the Tang reference fails to disclose the recited limitations of claim 1 relating to a displayed visual representation comprising a time axis having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of a plurality of time ranges of differing durations arranged along the time axis in a sequence of increasing duration from a first time range of relatively short duration to additional time ranges of progressively longer duration, a category axis having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of the team members, and a plurality of graphic elements, a given one of the graphic elements specifying an activity state for a particular one of the plurality of team members for a particular time period by position relative to the respective category and time axes. See the final Office Action at page 3, first paragraph. However, the Examiner argues that these deficiencies of Tang as applied to claim 1 are

overcome by the teachings of Seybold as shown in FIG. 2A and described in its specification at column 7, lines 15-37 and at column 8, lines 33-65. Appellants respectfully disagree.

Firstly, neither Tang nor Seybold teach or suggest the recited limitation wherein a time axis has axis positions corresponding to respective ones of a plurality of time ranges of differing durations arranged along the time axis in a sequence of increasing duration from a first time range of relatively short duration to additional time ranges of progressively longer duration. As the Examiner correctly concedes in the final Office Action at page 3, first paragraph, Tang fails to teach any time axis. Seybold, on the other hand, not only fails to disclose the claimed time axis having axis positions corresponding to time ranges of differing, and progressively increasing, durations, but rather teaches away by instead disclosing two timescales, each of which is always separated into equal time units, such as weeks in a month or days of a week, regardless of which time unit is selected. See the specification of Seybold at, for example, column 2, line 62, to column 3, line 33; at column 8, lines 10-17 and at column 8, lines 33-55. This difference may be appreciated by comparing the labels of timescales 136 and 138 in FIGS. 2A-3B of Seybold with time axis 1003 in FIG. 10 of the present application. Unlike time axis 1003, timescales 136 and 138 clearly do not have the recited axis positions corresponding to time ranges of differing, and progressively increasing, durations.

In the Advisory Action dated July 17, 2007, at page 2, first paragraph, the Examiner asserts that “Tang does in fact teach two different time durations along the axis see figure 2. One duration of 2 weeks and another duration of one month are present. Therefore there is a range of durations in an increasing fashion along an axis.” Appellants first note that FIG. 2 of Tang does not depict an axis at all, much less one with axis positions corresponding to time ranges of differing, and progressively increasing, durations. Rather, figure 2 of Tang illustrates a computer system comprising a communication server which receives messages from a plurality of computers and transmits the received data to the intended recipients; see Tang at [0074].

Appellants thus assume that the Examiner is instead referring to FIG. 2A of Seybold, which is the only figure of Seybold in which a “duration of 2 weeks and another duration of one month are present.” Despite the Examiner contentions that Seybold shows “a range of durations in an increasing fashion along an axis,” Appellants respectfully submit that FIG. 2A of Seybold

depicts two timescales, 136 and 138. Timescale 136 has axis positions corresponding to respective ones of time ranges of equal duration; i.e., individual months; and timescale 138 has axis positions corresponding to respective ones of time ranges of equal duration; i.e., individual biweekly periods. Nowhere does FIG. 2A of Seybold teach or even suggest the claimed arrangement wherein a time axis has axis positions corresponding to respective ones of a plurality of time ranges of differing durations arranged along the time axis in a sequence of increasing duration from a first time range of relatively short duration to additional time ranges of progressively longer duration.

Moreover, in formulating the rejection of claim 1 in the final Office Action at page 3, first paragraph, the Examiner relies on column 7, lines 15-37, of Seybold as teaching or suggesting the recited limitation wherein a given one of the graphic elements specifies an activity state for a particular one of the plurality of team members for a particular time period. This activity state may represent the activity that a team member was engaged in during a time period or may represent the activity that a team member is currently engaged in. See, for example, the present specification at page 26, lines 1-3. Seybold, on the other hand, is directed to task scheduling and, as such, discloses only techniques directed to displaying the task which a user is scheduled to work on during a given time period, rather than an activity state as recited. See, e.g., column 7, lines 24-26, and column 7, lines 34-37.

Even if it were possible to combine the teachings of Tang with those of Seybold to reach the present invention, there would be no motivation to do so, despite the Examiner's assertions in the final Office Action at page 3, first paragraph, that it would be obvious to combine the teachings of Seybold with those of Tang because "to do so would . . . provide the user visual access to resource and task data, and direct ways to view and manipulate information" and in the Advisory Action at page 2, third paragraph, that "a time scale like [sic] seen in Seybold would better convey visual assistance to view and manipulate the information since it would be organized by time."

Appellants respectfully note that Tang discloses techniques for displaying a contact list which shows the time since electronic devices corresponding to each user were last active. See Tang at, for example, [0104]. The Tang display already provides an appropriate visualization of

all the necessary temporal information to be displayed in conjunction with its contact list, as indicated in, for example, FIGS. 15 and 18 of Tang, utilizing designated icons rather than timescales, much less configurable timescales. One skilled in the art would not be motivated to look to a significantly more complex technique, such as the configurable timescales taught by Seybold, to alter the display techniques taught by Tang.

Moreover, Appellants respectfully submit that Seybold is not analogous prior art and therefore cannot form the basis for a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103. See, e.g., MPEP § 2141.01(a); *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 1446, 24 USPQ2d 1443, 1445 (Fed. Cir. 1992) (“In order to rely on a reference as a basis for rejection of an applicant’s invention, the reference must either be in the field of applicant’s endeavor or, if not, then be reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the inventor was concerned.”); *In re Clay*, 966 F.2d 656, 659, 23 USPQ2d 1058, 1060-61 (Fed. Cir. 1992) (“A reference is reasonably pertinent if, even though it may be in a different field from that of the inventor’s endeavor, it is one which, because of the matter with which it deals, logically would have commended itself to an inventor’s attention in considering his problem.”). Indeed, in *In re Clay*, the court disagreed with the PTO’s argument that the reference and claimed inventions were part of the same endeavor, “maximizing withdrawal of petroleum stored in petroleum reserves,” and instead found that a reference was not reasonably pertinent to the problem with which the inventor was concerned because a person having ordinary skill in the art would not reasonably have expected to solve the problem of dead volume in tanks for refined petroleum by considering a reference dealing with plugging underground formation anomalies. See also *Wang Laboratories, Inc. v. Toshiba Corp.*, 993 F.2d 858, 26 USPQ2d 1767 (Fed. Cir. 1993), in which the court expressly rejected an argument that a reference to a single in-line memory module (SIMM) for an industrial controller was in the same field of endeavor as a patent application directed to a SIMM for installation on a printed circuit motherboard for use in personal computers merely because both related to memories; rather, the reference was found to be in a different field of endeavor because it involved memory circuits in which modules of varying sizes may be added or replaced, whereas the claimed invention involved compact modular memories.

In the Advisory Action, at page 2, fourth paragraph, the Examiner argues that Seybold and Tang are “analogous since they both deal with tracking people and tasks using a Graphical User Interface.” Appellants respectfully submit that Seybold, unlike either Tang or the present invention, relates solely to the scheduling of future activities, rather than the determination of past or current activity states. Thus, Appellants respectfully submit that Seybold is thus neither in the field of Appellants’ endeavor nor logically would have commended itself to an inventor’s attention in considering his problem, much less have been an obvious candidate for combination with Tang.

Furthermore, Appellants respectfully submit that the Examiner’s explanations are conclusory statements of the sort rejected by both the Federal Circuit and the U.S. Supreme Court. See *KSR v. Teleflex*, 127 S.Ct. 1727, 1741, 82 USPQ2d 1385, 1396 (U.S., Apr. 30, 2007), quoting *In re Kahn*, 441 F. 3d 977, 988 (Fed. Cir. 2006) (“[R]ejections on obviousness grounds cannot be sustained by mere conclusory statements; instead, there must be some articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusion of obviousness.”). There has been no showing in the present §103(a) rejection of claim 1 of objective evidence of record that would motivate one skilled in the art to combine Tang and Seybold to produce the particular limitations in question. Rather, the above-quoted statements of motivation provided by the Examiner are conclusory statements of the type ruled insufficient in the *KSR* case.

More specifically, the statements above are using the benefit obtained from a combination as a motivation for that combination; this is impermissible hindsight. In order to avoid the improper use of a hindsight-based obviousness analysis, particular findings must be made as to why one skilled in the relevant art, having no knowledge of the claimed invention, would have combined the teachings of Tang and Seybold in the claimed manner. See, e.g., *In re Kotzab*, 217 F.3d 1365, 1371, 55 USPQ2d 1313, 1317 (Fed. Cir. 2000). The Examiner’s conclusory statements do not adequately address the issue of motivation to combine references. “It is improper, in determining whether a person of ordinary skill would have been led to this combination of references, simply to ‘[use] that which the inventor taught against its teacher.’” *In re Sang-Su Lee*, 277 F.3d 1338, 1344 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (quoting *W.L. Gore v. Garlock, Inc.*, 721 F.2d 1540, 1553, 220 USPQ 303, 312-13 (Fed. Cir. 1983)).

It is therefore believed that independent claim 1 is not obvious in view of the proposed combination of Tang and Seybold.

Independent claims 10 and 18 contain limitations similar to those of independent claim 1 and are thus allowable for reasons similar to those identified above with regard to claim 1.

Dependent claims 2-9, 11-17 and 19-27 are believed allowable for at least the reasons identified above with regard to their respective independent claims.

In view of the above, Appellants believe that claims 1-27 are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph B. Ryan", followed by a horizontal line.

Date: October 1, 2007

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CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. A method for use in providing a Web team portal in a collaborative system comprising the steps of:

setting up a plurality of team members to collaboratively communicate;

automatically collecting presence information of each of said members in said team;

automatically determining a current location for each team member; and

dynamically displaying a visual representation having a plurality of display windows including at least said team members, said collected presence and location information, and a set of mechanisms for a team member to use in conjunction with said displayed presence and location information to initiate a prescribed mode of communicating with one or more others of said members in said team for a particular collaborative purpose;

wherein said visual representation comprises a time axis having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of a plurality of time ranges of differing durations arranged along the time axis in a sequence of increasing duration from a first time range of relatively short duration to additional time ranges of progressively longer duration, a category axis having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of the team members, and a plurality of graphic elements, a given one of the graphic elements specifying an activity state for a particular one of the plurality of team members for a particular time period, the particular one of the plurality of team members being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the category axis, the particular time period being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the time axis.

2. The method as defined in claim 1 further including a step of a member of said team employing said displayed presence and location information and at least one of said mechanisms to initiate communication with one or more of others of said members in said team.

3. The method as defined in claim 1 wherein said prescribed mode of communicating includes at least either an asynchronous mode or a synchronous mode.

4. The method as defined in claim 3 wherein said step of dynamically displaying includes a step of automatically updating one or more of said plurality of display windows.

5. The method as defined in claim 4 wherein said steps of automatically collecting presence and location information include steps of automatically updating said presence and location information, respectively.

6. The method as defined in claim 5 wherein said presence information for a team member represents prescribed activities of said team member regarding one or more of predetermined instrumentalities and/or actions.

7. The method as defined in claim 6 wherein said set of mechanisms includes at least email, chat or voice call.

8. The method as defined in claim 6 further including a step of maintaining said collected and updated presence and location information and a step of notifying said participants of changes of status in said presence and location information for said members in said team.

9. The method as defined in claim 8 wherein said set of mechanisms further includes persistent chat and said step of initiating communication further includes initiating a persistent chat session.

10. Apparatus for use in providing a Web team portal in a collaborative system comprising:

means for setting up a plurality of team members to collaboratively communicate;

means for automatically collecting presence information of each of said members in said team;

means for automatically determining a current location for each team member; and

means for dynamically displaying a visual representation having a plurality of display windows including at least said team members, said collected presence and location information, and a set of mechanisms for a team member to use in conjunction with said displayed presence and location information to initiate a prescribed mode of communicating with one or more others of said members in said team for a particular collaborative purpose;

wherein said visual representation comprises a time axis having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of a plurality of time ranges of differing durations arranged along the time axis in a sequence of increasing duration from a first time range of relatively short duration to additional time ranges of progressively longer duration, a category axis having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of the team members, and a plurality of graphic elements, a given one of the graphic elements specifying an activity state for a particular one of the plurality of team members for a particular time period, the particular one of the plurality of team members being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the category axis, the particular time period being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the time axis.

11. The invention as defined in claim 10 further including a means for allowing a member of said team to employ said displayed presence and location information and at least one of said mechanisms to initiate communication with one or more of others of said members in said team.

12. The invention as defined in claim 10 wherein said prescribed mode of communicating includes at least either an asynchronous mode or a synchronous mode.

13. The invention as defined in claim 12 wherein said means for dynamically displaying includes means for automatically updating one or more of said plurality of display windows.

14. The invention as defined in claim 13 wherein said means for automatically determining location information includes means for automatically updating said location information.

15. The invention as defined in claim 14 wherein said means for automatically collecting presence information includes means for automatically updating said presence information.

16. The invention as defined in claim 15 wherein said presence information for a participant represents prescribed activities of said participant regarding one or more of predetermined instrumentalities and/or actions.

17. The invention as defined in claim 16 wherein said set of mechanisms includes at least email, chat or voice call.

18. Apparatus for use in providing a Web team portal in a collaborative system comprising:

a call set up unit to set up a plurality of members in a team to collaboratively communicate;

a user agent unit to automatically collect presence and location information of each of said members in said team; and

a visual display unit to dynamically display a visual representation having a plurality of display windows including at least said team members, said collected presence and location information, and a set of mechanisms for a team member to use in conjunction with said displayed presence and location information to initiate a prescribed mode of communicating with one or more others of said members in said team for a particular collaborative purpose;

wherein said visual representation comprises a time axis having axis positions corresponding to respective ones of a plurality of time ranges of differing durations arranged along the time axis in a sequence of increasing duration from a first time range of relatively short duration to additional time ranges of progressively longer duration, a category axis having axis

positions corresponding to respective ones of the team members, and a plurality of graphic elements, a given one of the graphic elements specifying an activity state for a particular one of the plurality of team members for a particular time period, the particular one of the plurality of team members being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the category axis, the particular time period being indicated by position of the graphic element relative to the time axis.

19. The invention as defined in claim 18 further including a device to allow a member of said team to employ said displayed presence and location information and at least one of said mechanisms to initiate communication with one or more of others of said members in said team.

20. The invention as defined in claim 18 wherein said prescribed mode of communicating includes at least either an asynchronous mode or a synchronous mode.

21. The invention as defined in claim 20 wherein said visual display unit automatically updates one or more of said plurality of display windows.

22. The invention as defined in claim 21 wherein said user agent unit automatically updates said presence and location information.

23. The invention as defined in claim 22 wherein said presence information for a participant represents prescribed activities of said participant regarding one or more of predetermined instrumentalities and/or actions.

24. The invention as defined in claim 23 wherein said set of mechanisms includes at least email, chat or voice call.

25. The invention as defined in claim 22 wherein said user agent unit further maintains said collected and updated presence and location information and notifies said participants of changes of status in said presence information for said participants in said group.

26. The invention as defined in claim 25 wherein said set of mechanisms further includes persistent chat and said step of initiating communication further includes initiating a persistent chat session.

27. The invention as defined in claim 26 wherein said set up unit communication further sets up third party calls.

EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None

RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None